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NATO TRANSFORMATION: BEYOND THE PRAGUE SUMMIT
INITIATIVES

by

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Preface

This research paper was initially an analysis of the European Unions (EU) attempt to create a European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) to provide it with some degree of military capability outside of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). There were fears that this effort would be threatening to NATO, but my research soon disproved this in my mind. The paper then evolved into an analysis of the fledgling efforts to develop the NATO Response Force (NRF), how it would be used as a catalyst for transformation, and its relationship with the ERRF. My choice of topic was both good and bad, as there was no lack of discussion of NATO and the EU, with both organizations having their summits within months of each other in the midst of my investigation. But these summits and the actions thereof were eclipsed by other events on the world stage; the Bush administration push to war with Iraq, and the concomitant rift between the US and some NATO allies and among EU member states. In the heart of this controversy, I had the great opportunity to go to Brussels and meet with officials of NATO, the EU, and Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). This trip cemented what was already my heart felt view; NATO must fundamentally transform to move effectively into the 21st century security environment. Thus my initial attempt to look at one aspect of NATO at an operational level evolved into this higher-level overview of fundamental change.

I would like to thank my host organization, the Atlantic Council of the US, and acknowledge the wonderful opportunity and eclectic education of the past year.

Abstract

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been the most important and successful alliance of all time, but today faces many challenges; search for relevancy with the end of the cold war, growing military capabilities gap compared to the US, requirements of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), new Bush doctrine of preemption, expansion of NATO members, and creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF). Meeting these challenges has been made more difficult by the friction created by the war in Iraq and the division between the NATO allies. During the Prague summit in November of 2002, NATO invited 7 new countries to join the alliance, and laid out plans for transforming. This transformation is aimed at giving the alliance the capability (forces, command and control structure) to be relevant, but does not address the more important issue of NATO's role in today's security environment. My contention is that while the Prague initiatives are excellent, assuming they can be implemented, they will be meaningless unless the member states address the strategic future of the alliance in the 21st century, and its role in the global war on terrorism.

The author surveyed studies and papers from think tanks and from NATO and EU, attended numerous panel discussions with subject experts, and questioned NATO, EU and US representatives and military leaders.

Chapter 1

Introduction

“It is essential that NATO continues to knit together the community of European and North American democracies as an alliance of shared values and collective security. It would be wrong to draw the conclusion that we should stop pushing NATO to change to address these new threats. If anything, we need to redouble those efforts....At the end of the day, it is to NATO that we will all return to seek common ground and cooperation on the momentous issues facing the trans-Atlantic community.”¹

Marc Grossman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee

NATO has been the most important and successful alliance of all time. But many would say it was the most important alliance of its time, and largely due to its success is no longer relevant. This question of relevancy has been around to greater or lesser degree since the fall of the Soviet Union, was maybe put to rest after Bosnia and settlement of the out of area debate, and is certainly resurrected in light of events associated with OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF).

During the Prague summit in November of 2002, NATO invited 7 new countries to join the alliance, and laid out plans for transforming. This transformation is aimed at giving the alliance the capability (forces, command and control structure) to be relevant, but does not address the more important issue of NATO’s role in today’s security environment. My contention is that while the Prague initiatives are excellent, assuming they can be implemented, they will be meaningless unless the member states address the strategic future of the alliance in the 21st century world, and its role in the global war on terrorism.

The challenges facing NATO are many: the capabilities gap compared to the US, requirements of the Global War on Terrorism, new Bush doctrine of preemption, expansion of NATO members, and creation of the NATO Response Force. Meeting these challenges is more difficult in light of the friction created by the war in Iraq and the division between NATO allies and among EU members. The relationship between NATO and the EU has also become more important, as both organizations expand their membership, and have evermore-common membership, and as the EU strives to increase its political influence and have some degree of military capability outside of NATO.

The Prague Summit in November of 2002 ended with an aggressive agenda for NATO, one that seeks to address many of these issues and transform the alliance. The primary transformation initiatives from Prague, other than inviting 7 more nations to join, are: the creation of a rapidly deployable highly capable force, the NATO Response Force (NRF); the latest effort to improve European military capabilities, the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC); and the creation of 2 new strategic commands, one for Operations and one for Transformation. These are all excellent concepts, important to NATO's effectiveness. However, even if you accomplish these things, which is far from certain, you will not have an effective NATO without a more fundamental change for the alliance.

This fundamental change must start with a threat assessment, leading to agreement on a mission, objectives, and ways of achieving those objectives. It must be addressed in terms of Europe as a whole, to include all members of NATO and the EU. This should lead to an arrangement whereby NATO becomes the primary security apparatus for all of Europe, and European military capabilities are addressed in toto. This arrangement could only work

effectively if coupled with a change in the decision making process, so that some operations can occur without consensus. These changes would require a new strategy and an amended treaty.

This paper calls for significant changes in NATO, which would not be easy under the best of circumstances. Unfortunately this aggressive and hopeful agenda is made even harder by strained relationships following OIF. The alternatives are to ignore the problems and see NATO decrease in importance, or accept that NATO is merely a vehicle for the continued consolidation of Europe and should not seek greater ambitions. My hope is that Europe and the US can look beyond their differences to their shared values and interests, and truly transform NATO from the top to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Notes

¹ Grossman, Marc, in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee. *Washington Post*, 27 March 2003.

Chapter 2

Context: NATO in 2003

The aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks brought latent resentments to the surface under the banner of unilateralism vs. multilateralism. The initial solidarity based on America as a victim weakened when the United States gave the challenge a military cast by declaring war on terrorism. And it disappeared with the elaboration of a strategy of preemption. It was a strategy made necessary by security threats launched by private groups unrestrainable by deterrence (because they have no territory to defend) and inaccessible to diplomacy (because they sought total victory). These threats were compounded by the danger that weapons of mass destruction might fall into the hands of terrorists or rogue states. But preemption ran counter to established principles of sovereignty that justified war only as resistance to aggression or the imminence of attack. However much that principle had been honored in the breach, some European allies resisted the implication that the United States could modify established principles by fiat.¹

—Henry A. Kissinger

The beginning of the new century is a challenging time for NATO. It faces persistent cries of irrelevancy at the same time that it is busy running operations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, and has member troops engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq. It finds itself with an ever-widening capabilities gap with the US, in an environment that makes it harder than ever to close that gap. The very conditions created by the success of the alliance breed the lack of cohesion and the lack of political will that could lead to its demise. These problems weren't created by the crisis in Iraq, but that situation exacerbated and highlighted them for all to see. A look at the current context for NATO reveals both the need for fundamental change, and the difficulties that abound with achieving that change.

The Cold War Legacy

There is no need for a detailed discussion of the origins of NATO or a rehashing of the cold war. Suffice it to say that NATO for many years had a clear sense of purpose; defend its member states from attack by the USSR and the Warsaw Pact. This was done for 40 years by having standing ground forces (and air and naval) ready to defend attack from the east. Deterrence worked, as the USSR never did attack and is now a relic of history. But these 40 years left NATO with significant legacy aspects that are keeping it from being an effective fighting force in the 21st century.

Number one is the capability gap. There was always a gap between the US and its European counterparts, but once the wall fell, there was decreasing motivation to modernize forces. With the threat seemingly gone, Europe cashed in its peace dividend. The cold war was won by deterrence and defensive in-place forces, ones not designed for preemptive attack outside of the European continent. This was partly a matter of geography. Europe developed forces to fight the foe next door; it did not need to transport them across the ocean. The static, ground-centric forces that remain are largely obsolete for the demands of the current security environment. Conversely, the US had to develop a degree of expeditionary warfare to deploy its forces to Europe and support its many security interests outside of Europe.

The end of communism in Europe and the fall of the USSR, despite problems such as those in the Balkans, left Europe without a clear threat. This lack of a perceived threat has decreased the will to improve capabilities, and has led to a lack of cohesion among the allies. It is much easier for Europe to challenge the US when their existence is no longer dependent on her military power. It also created the environment for Europe to seek expansion and consolidation towards a Europe whole and free, leading to an inward regional focus. Conversely, the lack of

another superpower on the world stage left the US more free than ever to pursue her global interests, often outside of Europe.

To summarize the effects of the cold war on NATO is essentially to summarize the current state of affairs. Europe has mostly legacy forces incapable of rapidly deploying or sustaining action outside of their own territory, a populace averse to war, and leadership focused mostly at the national or regional level. General Ralston, SACEUR at the time, summarized the situation nicely in a speech at the Atlantic Treaty Association General Assembly in Istanbul, October of 2002, “The fact is...much of what exists today was designed for conventional warfare on a highly structured, linear battlefield, against a clearly defined enemy. While this construct was adequate for the Cold War scenario envisaged when the Washington treaty was drafted, it fails to counter today’s trans-national threats and asymmetric means of warfare. This requires fundamentally different doctrine, organizations, and equipment.”²

The Capabilities Gap

There has been a lot written about the capability gap between the US and its NATO allies. It has been jokingly said that NATO stands for Needs America To Operate. The gap is not a new issue, as the US has always called for more defense spending from Europe. But the situation has gotten much worse since the fall of the USSR and post 9-11. With the fall of the wall, European governments don’t see a threat that justifies increased defense spending. This has not been changed in the wake of 9-11. At the same time, 9-11 spurred the US to spend more on defense, widening the gap even more. In some ways, the US has advanced to the point that bringing allies into the battle can be detrimental rather than helpful.

For an excellent explanation of the capabilities gap, how NATO got there, and some ways to narrow it, look at Transforming NATO Forces: European Perspectives³. But I will briefly scope the problem by looking at one NATO member, Germany, who used to have one of the strongest militaries, and is now headlined in a New York Times article as a “Basket Case”.⁴ Germany’s defense spending is 1.5 percent of GDP, as compared to 3.3 percent for the US, and well short of NATO goal of 2% GDP.⁵ Over half of that budget goes to pay and benefits, compared with 36% for the US, and only 13 percent being spent on new equipment.⁶ It’s very telling that Germany had to lease aircraft from the Ukraine to fly its peacekeeping troops to Afghanistan.⁷ Many of the other NATO nations are in a similar sad state.

An obvious reason for the gap is the different level in defense spending. The US has always spent more, and both cut back after the fall of the USSR. But the US significantly increased its defense spending post 9-11. (It should be noted that much of this money is being spent on operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa, and other GWOT activities. It is not all buying new high tech equipment.) European defense spending has steadily declined throughout the 1990s, to an average of less than 2 percent of gross domestic product.⁸ Even constant defense spending levels equate to a reduction in capability over time. Moreover, as the number of operations increase, larger budget shares are devoted to operational costs at the expense of investment and research and development.

There are many other contributing factors to the poor state of the European military. Some European militaries have labor unions whose policies, while beneficial to an individual, may have negative consequences to the force. For example, the average age of a Belgian soldier is 40, compared to 28 for the US.⁹ European Armies have failed to use privatization and contracting out for non-combat needs. It is needlessly expensive to have active duty military

members, with all of the expense that entails, performing duties such as cutting hair. Does the Belgian Army need to have a barber on its payroll as such? The use of conscripts rather than an all-volunteer professional military also decreases capability.

Another major factor is that each member country military has its own bureaucracy. It is expensive to have “15 armies, 14 air forces, and 13 navies”, with all the accompanying support personnel and infrastructure. In the US we are moving towards consolidating functions common to all services. But this is difficult, even within the US. For instance, any talk of having one service academy for all the services is quickly shot down by the services and the congressman of the host state. The problems are the same when we try to consolidate the base exchange or commissary systems, or when you try to close unneeded bases. If we have trouble consolidating for the betterment of our defense establishment, imagine the problems when 18 sovereign nations are involved. But that does not mean Europe shouldn’t try.

There are many ways to narrow the gap: increased spending on defense; combined training and procurement; pooling of some of the more expensive assets, such as strategic airlift, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets, Command and Control (C2) infrastructure; the use of niche capabilities, with some level of redundancy; changing to an all professional military. Or the big step, establish a common European military.

The ramifications of the capability gap go beyond the mere tactical level interoperability issues. As noted by Ian Forbes, Interim Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, the capabilities gap not only causes military dysfunction and inefficiencies, but arguably creates “political division with distinctive US and European views of foreign policy.”¹⁰ The theory, most notably presented by Robert Kagan in his article “Power and Weakness”, likening the US and Europe to Mars and Venus, is that if you don’t have hard power, your policies will call for soft power, and

vise versa. “Today’s transatlantic problem, in short, is not a George Bush problem. It is a power problem. American military strength has produced a propensity to use that strength. Europe’s military weakness has produced a perfectly understandable aversion to the exercise of military power.”¹¹ This is an interesting argument with some merit. You could also argue that Europeans favor soft power and that is why they have not devoted more of their budget to hard power. But whether the capability gap is a cause or a symptom, the important point is that the two sides of the Atlantic seem to have some fundamentally different views of the world and how to deal with its problems.

NATO and EU Expansion

The fall of 2002 was the time of both the NATO and EU summits, when many new members were invited into both organizations. NATO membership will within about a year grow from 19 to 26, while the EU will grow from 15 to 25. NATO will not reap significant military capability from this new membership, but will add some niche capabilities, access, overfly rights, etc. One can argue that with more members it will be harder to get consensus. Initially the new states might tend to be more pro-American than some of our long-term allies, as witnessed by the Iraq debacle and the “old Europe” and “new Europe” rhetoric. But in the long term, these countries will probably tend to fall more in line with “old Europe” as they become more intertwined economically and politically.

The biggest effect from expansion in the long term is that the relationship between the EU and NATO must grow as each membership becomes more reflective of the other. Convergence of the membership should ease the way to converging strategies on how to deal with problems. But simple enlargement without some fundamental changes will only prove the following

statement from Dr. Sean Kay of the Eisenhower Institute, “In the end, NATO enlargement is a symbolic political exercise with no meaningful value to the issue that matters most to Americans today, security against terrorism.”¹²

9-11, Article 5, and the War in Afghanistan

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, there was broad support from around the world, and certainly from our NATO allies. For the first time in its over 50 year history, the alliance invoked the key article of the treaty, Article 5, which says that “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.”¹³ This was considered monumental at the time, but tellingly when the US went into Afghanistan it did not go in with NATO per se, although some NATO members did participate and continue to participate in the post war period. NATO AWACS also flew over the US; symbolically huge, but little beyond symbolism. Why didn’t the US use NATO as such for the war? Probably because the US did not want a repeat of Kosovo, where it provided almost all of the capability, but had to operate under the constraints “war by committee”.

Not using NATO for the war in Afghanistan was seen by many as the true death knell for the alliance as the primary military organization that the US would turn to in a time of crisis; Article 5 invoked and then essentially ignored. SACEUR General Jones said that if the NRF had been operational, then the US would have taken and used the proffered NATO support.¹⁴ Maybe. Maybe not. Because even if NATO had the capability, US commanders may not have wanted to be constrained or slowed by the need for consensus.

Although NATO was not involved as such, NATO allies were involved and continue to be involved in Afghanistan. NATO is considering taking over ISAF in the future. This brings up

another area of contention on the European side of the Atlantic, this division of duties. Where America goes in and does the high-end combat, and NATO forces follow up with peacekeeping and peace enforcing. This has been put derogatorily as ‘the US cooks and Europe does the dishes’. The answer to that is maybe Europe should then learn how to cook!

The most significant effect of 9-11 for NATO is that Americans see it as a sea change in security issues, and that view is not shared by all of our European allies. This difference is illuminated by the events leading up to, and I’m quite sure the events that will follow, OIF.

OIF and the Turkey Debacle

At the time of this writing, spring 2003, the US and its European allies are in the midst of what many consider the deepest rift since the end of WWII. The thoughts of many on this are summed up nicely by Sir Timothy Garden with the Centre for Defense Studies, Kings College London, in his think piece entitled, “NATO: the end in sight?” He says “The Iraq crisis may have taken its first casualty before a shot is fired. NATO is looking damaged after an acrimonious internal division over preparation for a possible war. … It seems now that NATO’s days at the center of international security affairs are numbered.”¹⁵ Not everyone is so negative but most agree there is a serious problem.

According to Christoph Bertram, Director of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, the rift predates the problems associated with OIF. He sees three principle causes: A Europe whole and free (maybe overstated, but well on the way); The US as sole superpower; the primary threat is no longer in Europe. He goes on to say that the situation is aggravated by the fact that Europe lacks a “strategic sense” and is still too focused regionally, and the US has not quite learned to deal with its unprecedented and unchecked power.¹⁶ These

problems were exacerbated and brought to light by the events leading up to the war in Iraq. An article in the Wall Street Journal on March 18th, just prior to the start of the war is representative of the press at the time, “Mr. Bush’s decision to go it nearly alone – along with Europe’s decision to allow that to happen – is threatening to relegate both the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to permanent weakness, if not complete irrelevancy.”¹⁷

The tensions between allies were brewing for many months, but eased when the US asked for and got resolution 1441 giving Iraq one more chance to comply. The real divisions showed up in the debate over support to Turkey, which started in December of 2002, when Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz was in Brussels and indicated that the US would be asking for AWACS, Patriot missiles, and chemical and biological equipment to be used in Turkey if there was a war. He also wanted other support that would free up US forces, such as NATO forces guarding US bases in Europe and patrolling the Mediterranean, as well as post-war support in Iraq.

In mid-January the US made a formal request for support. At that time France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg argued that planning for support to Turkey amounted to endorsing the war with Iraq, so they would not go along with it. The deadlock went on for about 5 weeks, before Turkey invoked Article 4, which says, “The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.”¹⁸ All the US and Turkey were initially asking for was for planning for support in terms of missile defense, airborne early warning, and chemical and biological defense assets. Yet even after Turkey invoked Article 4, there were six days of deliberations, including 13 hours on a Sunday before an agreement was finally reached.

The final day of discussions came down to 17 against one, Belgium. Why 17, and not 18? Because France had been cut out of the decision making process when it became clear that they would not relent. This was done by taking the action to the Defense Planning Committee (DPC), and was only possible because France had withdrawn from the formal military aspect of NATO back in the 1960's. Had we not been able to circumvent France we would have gone to war without a decision on Article 4. This statement is supported by France's continued refusal to go along with the US position on Iraq in other fora, specifically the UN and the EU. Reading the statement that resulted from weeks of debate makes you wonder why it was so difficult to agree to such a bland document. It simply acknowledges Turkey's request for consultations and reaffirms the Allies determination to fulfill their treaty obligations, and then authorizes planning for AWACs, missile defense, and chemical/biological capability to Turkey, while continuing to support UN efforts for a peaceful solution to the problem.

There are many reasons for the disagreement, among them local politics for the Germans and the Belgiks, and for France its typical efforts to "balance" US power. The ridiculous nature of the argument is highlighted by the fact that the Germans were blocking planning for support to Turkey, a NATO ally, while they actually had forces in Kuwait, which is not a NATO ally. But beneath all the politics and over-blown rhetoric, there are legitimate differences. As Philip Gordon, a senior fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institute points out in his paper, *Iraq: The Transatlantic Debate*, there are many reasons for Europe and the US to differ on their views of Iraq and how to deal with it. First, 9-11 and the anthrax that followed on its heels happened in the US, not the continent.

These proximate factors only exacerbated some more long-standing differences in American and European perceptions and strategic culture that had already done much to split the two sides on Iraq. Due to their long history of relative invulnerability (a product of friendly neighbours and protective oceans) and

unprecedented relative power in the world, Americans have developed a much lower tolerance for vulnerability than their European counterparts. This has been true for decades-it was evident in the cold war debates of the 1970s and 1980s, for example, as Americans increasingly sought alternatives to détente and mutually assured destruction with the Soviet Union while Europeans were reconciled to living with both-and has only grown, along with American power, in more recent years. During the 1990s, America's determination to take forceful action against 'rogue states' such as Iran and Iraq, and willingness to spend billions of dollars in an effort to protect Americans from the unlikely event of a ballistic missile attack on US territory, were further examples of a low threshold for living with vulnerabilities and a readiness to expend significant resources to deal with them. These factors are relevant today, as Americans insist on removing the threat from Iraq-and put their faith in their technology and military prowess to do it- whereas Europeans seem much more comfortable with accepting, containing and trying to deter that threat.¹⁹

He also points out that the US is much more the target than is Europe. [I agree that this is many people's perception, but it is wrong. Al Qaeda style terrorism and WMD make every state a target (witness the Bali nightclub bombing), and terrorism, along with a host of other issues such as drug trafficking, are global threats and can only be dealt with effectively on that basis.] He goes on to say that when it comes to regime change and "nation building", we have very different historical perspectives to draw from. The US thinks of postwar Japan and Germany as nation building success stories, whether they are apt comparisons or not. Conversely, France might be reminded of its time in Indo-china or Algeria, and Britain of its experiences in India or the middle east, to include Iraq, and would not approach it with the same degree of sanguinity.

Only time will tell how deeply these divisions on Iraq will affect NATO in the long term. But it is clear that it has caused a serious rift. The US Ambassador to NATO called it "a true crisis for NATO."²⁰ Representative Tom Lantos, the ranking democrat on the House International Relations Committee, says, "I am particularly disgusted by the blind intransigence and utter ingratitude of France, Germany, and Belgium, countries which blocked our efforts to even engage in contingency planning if our ally Turkey were attacked by Iraq....The failure of these states to honor their commitments is beneath contempt."²¹ Another Representative, Peter

King in the same article called France a second rate country that should be dismissed from the alliance. Richard Perle in Aerospace Daily, Feb 13, said, “What I think we’re seeing on the part of the French is a manifestation, in the context of Iraqi policy, of a much deeper division, and I believe it is French policy to diminish our influence in Europe and indeed, in the world, [and] to shape the European Union as a counterweight to the United States.”²² The aftereffects of all this friction have not ended with the start of the war on Iraq. Even with the war in progress, diplomatic battles started over whether the US or the UN would control the rebuilding of Iraq. The battle lines are familiar, with France and Russia and Germany lining up against the US.

There has also been severe and unexpected damage to the US relationship with Turkey. The US asked for Turkey’s approval to open up a northern front in the war by putting approximately 60,000 troops near the border with Iraq. Additionally, the US expected to be able to fly sorties out of Turkish air bases. The Turks did not approve ground forces, and delayed the vote repeatedly while the US marched towards war and had troops on ships in the Mediterranean. They finally approved over flight, but no use of airbases, and even that not until after the war had started. This was a surprise to many people, as Turkey has been a staunch ally for half a century, is part of NATO, is in bad financial straits (the Turkish stock market was down 40% after news of the no vote). So why did it fail? First there is the Turkish mistrust of the US. It is a cultural issue expressed in the common saying “The Turks have no friends other than Turks.” The democratic process can be slow, messy, and deliver unpredictable results, especially with an inexperienced leader at the helm, as was the case in Turkey. The poor public attitude was worsened by portrayal in western media of Turkey as moneygrubbers. In reality, Turkey’s economy suffered dearly from first Iraq war, and they have legitimate concerns with the Kurds in the north of Iraq.

As Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz told Congress in late March, “There is no question that if we had an armored force in northern Iraq right now, the end would be closer.”²³ There is further friction due to Turkey wanting to enter northern Iraq, ostensibly to keep refugees and Kurd terrorists out, and secure the oil fields from the Kurds, while President Bush insists they stay out. And the loss of the multi-billion aid and loan package has been a severe blow to Turkey’s already hurting economy. Again, the end result is severely strained relationships with a previously staunch ally.

Turkey has its own reasons for these events, and differences won’t be as problematic in the long run as they will be with the French. President Bush sent an aid request to congress for \$8.5B, much less than \$30B grant and loan package they would have gotten, but it is an attempt to mend fences. Robert Kagan with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace summed it up nicely in his 9 April 2002 piece for the Washington Post, “The world’s sole superpower doesn’t need to hold grudges, and sometimes it can’t afford to. No ally imperiled the American war effort more than Turkey, after all, but it would be politically and strategically insane, as the United States works on building a democratic Iraq, to punish the only well-established moderate Muslim democracy in the region.”²⁴

The Article 4 issue with Turkey brings up an absolutely critical point about the NATO decision-making process; NATO must move past the requirement for consensus for every action. Consensus was workable when the decisions were either clear-cut or non-controversial. During the cold war, with a clear threat, the really big issues were agreed upon. Little issues such as how many tanks were to be stationed where, could be argued out and consensus reached, although it might be painful. But there are clearly some more fundamental issues to be dealt with today. The Europeans as a whole do not see the threat the same way the US does, although

we may both say it is terrorism and WMD. And that different view on the threat explains why we don't agree on the proper approach to deal with the threat.

The GWOT and the Bush Doctrine of Preemption

The terrorist attacks in NYC and Washington DC on September 11th were a life changing event for the US. This was to us a new world and a new threat requiring a new strategy and policy and military to deal with it. For many Europeans it was a terrible event, but different only in scale to what they had been experiencing for decades. The UK has had Irish Republican Army (IRA) bombings in London for many years. The Germans, the Spanish, the Turks, all have had terrorist activity on their soil. What they fail to understand is that terrorism post 9-11 is a different beast all together. Al Qaeda and their ilk, with no regard for human life, including their own, and no clear goal beyond destroying western culture and values, is not the same as the IRA. This fanaticism coupled with WMD changes the equation completely. The NATO Director of Information and Press succinctly described the difference in the American and European threat perception in regards to terrorism. To paraphrase, to the Americans terrorism is a long-term ideological war, akin to the one against communism and socialism. To the Europeans it is more like the common cold, in that terrorism is nothing new and will always be with us.²⁵

This stark difference in views was obvious to me during my week in Brussels, but was typified by statements from Christoph Bertram, Director of the German Institute for International Studies. In a panel discussion at the Brookings Institute he said that Americans think 9-11 changed the world, when in reality it only changed Americans. I say he is wrong, that 9-11 did change the world, but Europeans just don't believe it yet. He went on to say that the US needs to

“adapt to vulnerability” like the rest of the world. The US will not adapt to vulnerability. We will do what we must to limit vulnerability.

Given that we don’t have a true agreement on the threat, it is not surprising that we can’t agree on a proper approach to dealing with it. Many in Europe and the rest of the world are appalled at the new Bush doctrine of preemption. They see it as US hegemony and “cowboy” tactics. They’d prefer containment and engagement and the use of soft power tools. We see preemption as sometimes the only answer. You cannot contain an enemy who will commit suicide attacks, and you cannot be reactive. If you wait until terrorists get their hands on WMD and use those weapons to kill thousands of people, you have lost. Deterrence won’t work against an enemy who is happy to die for his cause. If deterrence doesn’t work and defense followed by offense doesn’t work, the only alternative is preemptive action. September 12th is too late; you must seek out your enemy and eliminate him wherever he is found.

“...defending the United States, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders. While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country.”²⁶

These words from the new National Security Strategy, which came out in the fall of 2002, caused much consternation among our European allies and the world at large. They took it to mean that the US was going to take advantage of its sole superpower status and use its military force all over the world without regard to NATO or international organizations such as the UN. It was clear to me in discussions with many Europeans, that they fear this preemptive strategy and feel it is wrong for world order. Although this is not the intent behind the strategy, the Iraq crisis and the increasingly isolated position of the US compared to the rest of the world, and the

US's unwavering will to go to war with or without UN support, only tends to validate these opinions.

This entire issue is summed up very nicely by Dr. Timothy Serfaty, Director, European Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, in congressional testimony.

More than an act of terrorism, the attack of September 11 pointed to an entirely different kind of military conflict. Wars are expected to originate in organized entities whose assets (territorial and otherwise) offer plausible targets for effective deterrence or, should deterrence fail, punishing retaliation designed to shorten the conflict and minimize damages. But this new kind of war is being launched by a world where the state does not exist against the world where it does-by the suicidal have-nothing of the slums determined to inflict maximum casualties on the have-it-all of Western democracies. This new kind of war is waged in the name of practices that prevailed at the close of the first millennium, around, say, the year 911-without limits, and even without weapons and for no identifiable earthly goal. Faced with this kind of enemy, it is not enough to deter and retaliate-it is imperative to deny and to preempt.²⁷

Given this fundamental difference between the US and many of our European allies, it is obvious to me that NATO as such will never act in a preemptive fashion unless we can convince our allies of the changed nature of the threat that requires a different approach to beat it, and NATO adopts some form of non-consensus decision making.

The silver lining on this dark cloud is that the cases where we need full blown military operations such as Iraq are bound to be limited, and the bulk of the effort will be police work, intelligence, banking, etc. Hopefully the ill will from disagreements on Iraq do not spill over into and detract from the previously high degree of cooperation among nations to counter terrorism with other than military means.

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Chapter 3

The EU, CFSP, ESDP, and the Rapid Reaction Force

“But a stronger Europe and ‘more Europe’ do not mean ‘less America’. By becoming a more active security player the EU needs to be an interesting security partner for the US. Only a more balanced transatlantic partnership is viable enough to handle conflict.

—HansBernard Weisserth
Head, ESDP Task Force, European Council Secretariat¹

The European Union is an ongoing experiment in subordination of national interest to that of greater Europe. It has evolved through the years since its earliest days as the European Coal and Steel Community, but always working towards a more integrated and secure Europe. The EU invited 10 more countries to join the community in the fall of 2002, bringing the total to 25. Its collective Gross Domestic Product (GDP) prior to this expansion is comparable to the US, and will exceed the US when the expansion is official in the spring of 2004. The EU has steadily grown in terms of political clout, and is a success in many ways; open borders, a Single Market, and a common currency. It seems only natural that as the EU seeks ever-greater unity and integration, it would also try to further its political voice and influence. This chapter takes a broad-brush look at the EU and its foreign and security policy efforts, because the EU and its interaction with NATO are a key element of the long-term health and future of the alliance.

CFSP and ESDP

The idea of a European Security and Defence (ESDP) policy is not new. It was on Europe's agenda on the heels of World War II, with the reconciliation of Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux. But for the fifty years of the Cold War, NATO was the institution that ensured a free and democratic Europe and cemented trans-Atlantic relationships. During this time NATO and its members - and in particular the US - consistently encouraged Europe in its efforts to forge a separate security and defense identity. The US support continues, as evidenced in the latest National Security Strategy, "At the same time, we welcome our European allies' efforts to forge a greater foreign policy and defense identity with the EU, and commit ourselves to close consultations to ensure that these developments work with NATO."² The conditions that followed the fall of communism have allowed the admittedly fledgling effort to forge a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to move ahead.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of communism meant that Europe no longer faced a monolithic threat, one shared with the US, of massive conventional and non-conventional attack. This threat was replaced by new challenges, such as the Balkans, that while not catastrophic none the less required action to protect European interests. Clearly these new challenges might not have the same importance for the US as for Europe. There might be times when the US (and by default NATO) would not want to be involved, but it would still be important for "Europe" as a whole. While these challenges might require other than a military response, some military capability would probably be needed. (For some, the lack of a clear threat also created European fear of US withdrawal from Europe, and another reason for a better "European" military capability.)

It should be self evident, but still important to note that a “common” policy does not mean a “single” policy. The EU member states have National Interests that will not always coincide with those of the other member states. But once the east/west barriers came down, and with the expanding membership of the EU, members share a wide range of common security interests. Where member states share common objectives and interests, they can be more effective when they act as one.

The crises in the Balkans starkly revealed the shortcomings of European national and collective military capabilities. Europe has sufficient numbers of troops, but not the capabilities required to project and sustain them for today's security challenges, let alone those of tomorrow. The EU realized that they could not have an effective foreign policy without the full range of capabilities to meet its objectives. In other words, the EU needed to add some degree of military power to its otherwise formidable political, diplomatic and economic tools to use in support of its foreign policy objectives. Having the capacity to use force when all other means fail is an essential component of a credible CFSP. Therefore, development of ESDP is the logical response for the EU to engage effectively in conflict prevention and crisis management.

Through the years there has been a degree of schizophrenia on both sides of the Atlantic concerning the Europeans having a coherent “European” security policy, and the military capability to back it up. On the one hand the US has always carped on its allies to pull their own weight, yet we have feared damage to NATO and decreasing US influence if this effort was too successful. From the European side, the desire to have an autonomous capability has been balanced by a lack of political will to bring it to fruition, and a concurrent fear that it would be an impetus for US withdrawal from Europe. The fears are all grounded in real concerns, but when you look at the common security interests and values shared by the EU and NATO members

alike, it follows that a strong Europe and an effective ESDP is a good thing for the US as well as Europe. The ever-greater integration of Europe, with growing and convergent NATO and EU membership, common currency, lingua franca (English), make this a long term but ever more realistic goal.

ESDP is moving ahead with initial baby steps, as it should be. Europeans are now laying the groundwork for "hard" military and civilian security, complementing its existing diplomatic, economic, development and trade instruments. First, the EU is taking responsibility for the military operation in Former Republic of Macedonia, as of 31 March 03. The operation is dubbed CONCORDIA, will last six months, and cost \$6M. It is being led by a Frenchman, and France is providing about half of the 320 military and 80 civilian personnel.³ George Robertson, NATO Secretary General, says, "A new chapter in European security has opened. By taking on its first military mission, the EU is demonstrating that its project of a European security and defense policy has come of age."⁴ Secondly, the European Council is considering a military role in Bosnia following that of the current stabilization force of NATO (SFOR), and will conduct a first joint Crisis Management Exercise with NATO in November this year to test and validating the permanent arrangements and procedures for effective co-operation.

Hans-Bernhard Weisserth, the head of ESDP Task Force, European Council Secretariat, emphasizes the importance of real defense capabilities, "The Union can create as many committees and bureaucratic structures as we like but without real capabilities it can create noise but no real clout. Putting practical civilian and military strength at the top of our agenda is essential if ESDP is to work. This will remain highest priority." ... "Our ambitions in terms of building a European Security and Defence Policy and constantly improving our capabilities must be matched by adequate efforts in the area of defence spending."⁵ This is probably the key US

area of concern regarding the EU's ambitions. The reason is obvious: European defense capabilities are a zero sum gain. Member states only have a single set of forces. The European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) and the NATO PCC need to be mutually reinforcing and coordinated. When asked if their capability efforts were being coordinated, NATO and EU officials alike gave the same answer; it's being coordinated but not formally. With no formal coordination there is certainly room for conflict and competing requirements.

The European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF)

The military capability required for an effective CFSP is manifested in the ERF. The ERF genesis can be traced to the EU's current drive for CFSP, which started in 1992 when the European Community adopted the Maastricht Treaty, which made it the European Union, called for a common currency, and established a desire for a Common Foreign and Security Policy. A high representative for CFSP was created in 1997 at the Amsterdam treaty, and filled 2 years later by Mr. Javier Solana. Solana, who had previously been Secretary General for NATO, gave the position some credibility and possibly allayed some fears that this would undermine NATO. In December of 1999 at the Helsinki Council meeting, it was agreed to develop "the Union's military and non-military crisis management capability as part of a strengthened common European policy on security and defense" and to have "an autonomous capacity to take decisions and, where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises."⁶ The EU missions are known as the Petersburg tasks, defined in the Amsterdam treaty as, "humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking." The headline goals from

the Helsinki meeting essentially establish the ERRF as discussed below, to perform these missions.⁷

European leaders decided to establish, by 2003, a collective European capability, the ERRF. It called for the ability to deploy rapidly up to 50,000-60,000 troops, with additional air and naval forces as required.⁸ The forces would be drawn from a pool of about 100,000 made available from member states, along with about 400 combat aircraft and 100 warships. To read this would make you believe that there are a standing but rotating force available for use by the EU. This misunderstanding explains much of the consternation from the US side about the ERRF, as a standing force of 60,000 would be competing for resources with NATO forces. In reality, there is no ERRF per se. There is only the commitment from members that says they would be willing to contribute at any given time so many troops or capabilities to a given operation. But these same troops could be triple or quadruple hatted for a mission under NATO, UN, or a National flag, so a chance for conflicting demands certainly exists.

The EU and NATO

NATO and the European Union make for strange bedfellows. It is important to note that they are not monolithic organizations. NATO and the EU are made up of 23 nations, 11 of whom belong to both. Once the current round of expansion is formalized, it will be 32 nations, with 19 belonging to both. With all of these common member states they share many common interests, but until recently had no formal interaction. This changed as the EU tried to establish the ERRF, and the EU and NATO reached an agreement on how operations will be divvied up in Europe. The role of the EU as it gets more involved in crisis response and peacekeeping is important to the future of NATO.

There was a time when many feared the EU's efforts towards ESDP were the seeds of replacing NATO, and in the process lessening Europe's dependence on the US. Some would say that is France's long-term goal even now. A lot of these fears have been laid to rest with the agreement of December of 2002. After a 2 year delay in any progress for the ERRF, largely due to problems between Turkey and Greece, NATO and the EU have agreed on arrangements known as the Berlin Plus. The EU will use NATO planning capabilities and have access to NATO assets as approved by the NAC. The Deputy SACEUR will be the commander for any EU led activities in this realm, to minimize communication problems.⁹ By essentially putting EU operations under the umbrella of NATO, you make it much more likely for coordination and synergy between the two organizations. This is a wonderful arrangement and a significant step in EU-NATO relations.

If you look at Europe as a whole, it is clear that Europe needs to be able to do two types of military operations. First, stability operations such as those in the Baltics, with or without the US. And secondly, high-end operations with the US. It is hard to imagine a scenario requiring true high-end military force where the US would not be involved when Europe is. This thought is echoed, and the arrangement is presaged by Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen, "It is overwhelmingly likely that in any situation where any ally's involvement on a significant scale is justified, and where there is a consensus in Europe to undertake a military operation, the United States would be a part of that operation. In addition, it is difficult to imagine a situation in which the United States was prepared to participate, but our European Allies would prefer to act alone."¹⁰ He also argued for an approach that would ensure unitary planning.

Chapter Summary

The EU has gotten into the security business for several reasons. One, it is a natural outgrowth of their increased influence in soft power, and they want the hard power that completes the picture for them. Secondly, they see the need to ensure security for Europe, especially when the US has no direct interest. With the possible exception of France, it is fair to say the member states don't want the EU to be the next superpower. Competing national interests and diverse political persuasions of its member states will prevent the EU from ever becoming a super power in the sense of the US or Soviet Union, but they are headed that way in terms of economic power and global political influence.

The EU is an extraordinary organization, with soon to be 25 countries and over a hundred political parties represented. And as much as we speak of Europe as an entity, there is no such thing really, with all of the diverse people and cultures. The EU is however becoming more and more that mythical "Europe". From a US perspective the unique nature of the European Union and its specific way of pushing integration ahead is not easy to understand. One person likened the EU to a flock of birds, where if you look at it, it seems very chaotic and aimless. But the end result is all of those birds ending up in the same spot. The EU is undoubtedly a force to be reckoned with in the future. It is a strong force that NATO and the US can partner with to address common problems.

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Chapter 4

Transformation: The Prague Summit Initiatives

The United States wants NATO to be important. We believe in the Alliance and want it to succeed.[...] If NATO does not have a force that is quick and agile, which can deploy in days or weeks instead of months or years, then it will not have much to offer the world in the 21st century.”¹

—US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

At the NATO Prague Summit in November of 2002, the primary agenda item was the invitation of 7 countries to join NATO: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. This expansion was a fait accompli by the time of the summit, so the big news was transformation. This chapter will look briefly at the initiatives from the Prague summit to transform NATO. My contention is that while all of these are good concepts that need to be pursued and effected, it is attacking the problem from the tactical level, while the biggest problem is at the strategic level. In other words, even if these concepts for transforming the alliance are realized, they will not change the fundamental threat perception and will to use these transformed capabilities.

The NATO Response Force

The Prague Summit declaration acknowledges a need to transform the alliance to “meet the grave new threats and profound security challenges of the 21st century.”² To that end, NATO will “Create a NATO Response Force (NRF) consisting of a technologically advanced, flexible,

deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the Council. The NRF will also be a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities. We gave directions for the development of a comprehensive concept for such a force, which will have its initial operational capability as soon as possible, but not later than October 2004 and its full operational capability not later than October 2006, and for a report to Defence Ministers in Spring 2003. The NRF and the related work of the EU Headline Goal should be mutually reinforcing while respecting the autonomy of both organisations.³ Some European NATO diplomats see this as NATO's last chance to prove its military relevance to the US.

The NRF was proposed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in the fall of 2003, but the idea probably originated in the DC think tanks. The concept is described in *New Capabilities: Transforming NATO Forces*, "The best way to manage the transformation of NATO forces would be the development of a prototype Spearhead Force that incorporates what military experts collectively believe to be the most useful doctrine, training and equipment. This force would be robust, well equipped and trained, and, once fully constituted in a crisis, ready for rapid deployment either within or outside the European theater."⁴ This concept rightly envisions the NRF as a focal point to close the capabilities gap, and the mechanism to transform the alliance. As of this writing, the NRF is still conceptual, with details being worked out at a variety of levels.

The NRF is a rotational pool of land, sea and air forces; it is not a standing formation of elite forces. It will be organized under a Combined Joint Task Headquarters. It will be self-deployable in 5-30 days, and tailor able to a variety of missions. The concept calls to mind the Air Expeditionary Force concept the USAF adopted some years ago. There are essentially three

sets of designated forces. During a given 6-month period, one group of the set of three designated forces will be ready for deploying in 7 days and sustaining for 30. Another group will be in training and preparation for the upcoming vulnerability cycle, while the last is in a stand down phase from recent duty or vulnerability to duty. If a crisis arose, the units would be called upon as needed for that particular crisis. The NRF is not intended to be a competitor for the ERRF. It should complement the ERRF, which is meant to do low end tasks, while the NRF is focused at the higher end of combat.

The particulars of the NRF are still being worked out, but the general size and makeup can be assumed. The land force would be a brigade combat team equivalent, forced entry capable. This would include a mix of capabilities such as airborne task force, aviation task force, mechanized battalion, artillery, etc. The air component would consist of 3 squadron equivalents of fighter and attack type aircraft, air defense assets, tactical airlift, as well as support assets such as aerial refueling aircraft, Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) equivalent, and Airborne warning and Control System (AWACS), along with command and control package. The Naval component would consist of a carrier battle group, amphibious task group, and surface action group equivalents, along with other support. These forces could be tailored as required, for instance, for a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) that would be air and maritime heavy. Or a situation to separate two belligerents prior to hostilities, which would be land centric. Or it could be a large package utilizing all assets, as would have been the case had it been used in Afghanistan in October of 2001.⁵

The US support for the NRF is seen in the US National Security Strategy document; “NATO must build a capability to field, at short notice, highly mobile, specially trained forces wherever they are needed to respond to a threat against any member of the alliance.”⁶ How would the

NRF actually be used? It is clear from statements by the new SACEUR that the NRF is not being envisioned for peacekeeping in the Balkans. “It’s obvious we’re seeing a military metamorphosis of this alliance.” “No one has called me in and said you should develop a global capability, per se, but it clearly is something that is being discussed. The NRF will probably have the capability to do those things that the alliance wishes it to do, and if it’s going to be in different parts of the world, so be it—we will build it that way.”⁷

The Prague statement says, “The NRF will also be a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance’s military capabilities.” It has a much better chance at success than previous efforts for capability improvements because it is a focused and relatively modest capability to strive for. SACEUR has even said for emphasis that he doesn’t care if the force is only 10,000 strong, as long as it is capable.⁸ (Spoken like a true Marine!) But beyond getting the capability of the NRF itself, a lot of people are counting on spillover benefits to a generally more capable NATO. It provides a focus for national efforts to reach goals of PCC. It can establish a credible joint force to defend Allied interests.

ACT and ACO

Along with the NRF and the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), the Summit also calls for significant changes to NATO’s strategic commands. Again, these ideas are right on target, and long over due. “There will be two strategic commands, one operational, and one functional. The strategic command for Operations, headquartered in Europe (Belgium), will be supported by two Joint Force Commands able to generate a land-based Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) headquarters and a robust but more limited standing joint headquarters from which a sea-based CJTF headquarters capability can be drawn. There will also be land, sea and air components.”⁹

The former Allied Command Europe becomes Allied Command for Operations. This reflects the acknowledgement that NATO will operate outside of NATO borders. SACO would manage the NRF cycle, assign responsible CJTFs, supporting forces, ensure readiness, generate force packages and execute C2 for NRF operations.

The former Allied Command Atlantic, located in Norfolk next door to Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), becomes Allied Command Transformation. “The strategic command for Transformation, headquartered in the United States, and with a presence in Europe, will be responsible for the continuing transformation of military capabilities and for the promotion of interoperability of Alliance forces, in cooperation with the Allied Command Operations as appropriate.”¹⁰ Again this makes perfect sense, to capitalize on advancements made by the US in terms of warfighting concepts and capabilities. SACT would be responsible for transformational and interoperability aspects of the NRF.

The Prague Capabilities Commitment

From the Prague Summit Declaration:

Approve the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) as part of the continuing Alliance effort to improve and develop new military capabilities for modern warfare in a high threat environment. Individual Allies have made firm and specific political commitments to improve their capabilities in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defence; intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; command, control and communications; combat effectiveness, including precision guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defences; strategic air and sea lift; air-to-air refuelling; and deployable combat support and combat service support units. Our efforts to improve capabilities through the PCC and those of the European Union to enhance European capabilities through the European Capabilities Action Plan should be mutually reinforcing, while respecting the autonomy of both organisations, and in a spirit of openness.”

We will implement all aspects of our Prague Capabilities Commitment as quickly as possible. We will take the necessary steps to improve capabilities in the identified areas of continuing capability shortfalls. Such steps could include multinational efforts, role specialisation and reprioritisation, noting that in many cases additional financial resources will be required, subject as appropriate to parliamentary approval. We are committed to pursuing vigorously capability improvements. We have directed the Council in Permanent Session to report on implementation to Defence Ministers.”¹¹

The PCC is actually 488 commitments, 40 of which are multi-national in character, and 30 are either armament or equipment. There are 8 key focus areas. Strategic airlift has Germany as the lead along with 10 other nations. Strategic sealift involves 8 countries with Norway in the lead, with strong Dutch support. Air-to-air refueling is being led by Spain along with 8 other nations, with a plan to lease tankers with a memorandum of understanding by fall of 2004. The Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) is a JSTARS equivalent and has 14-15 countries signed up for development through 2006 and fielded force in 2006. The best hope for Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) is a German/Italian/French jamming pod. Those countries flying F-16s are trying to buy into the JDAM production line, but there are currently crypto problems with that. There is also a package of Nuclear/Biological/Chemical initiatives, and missile defense being coordinated with the US.¹²

The Prague Capabilities Commitment is the latest in a series of steps to improve European military capabilities. Whether or not it has any real effect remains to be seen. PCC is more focused than the DCI, and in conjunction with the NRF, may be a focal point for getting real capability for the alliance, and could be the seed for more improvements. But the root problems behind the capability gap are not changed because you have PCC instead of DCI. Unless Europeans can agree on a threat, and the need for forces to defeat that threat, improvements will continue to be marginal.

Chapter Summary

The initiatives from the Prague Summit, if realized, would result in a more capable NATO. But the current political dissonance demands that we look beyond these initiatives to the strategic transformation of the alliance. There is an interesting article by Ronja Kempkin entitled “The new NATO Response Force: Challenges for and Reactions from Europe.”¹³ He sees the proposal for the NRF to be more than just a way to focus transformation and capabilities improvement. He says that by proposing the NRF, the US has essentially asked three questions of its NATO allies; 1) Are you willing to fight the asymmetric threat of international terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction globally and – where –and whenever necessary – with preemptive strikes? 2) are you willing to change your security-policy focus from crisis management to active fighting? 3) are you willing to make resources and further funds available for military actions that go beyond Article 5? He goes on to make another key point; Although the NRF was agreed upon at Prague, it does not really mean that the answer to these three questions is yes. And that is because of a fundamental difference in the US and European concept of security. Kempkin says that for the US, “security is assured through a global ability to act, via active fighting under the military leadership of the US. While for most Europeans, security is based on regional civil-military actions and peacekeeping and peace enforcement.”

Kempkin’s point is key to my thesis; regardless of how capable the NRF is, unless you can reconcile the political will and objectives of the governments that support it and authorize its use, it will never be used as such. Many cynics would say that the US has no intention of ever using the NRF as such, but just want access to a sharper set of tools, to use the current vernacular. Although there may be some truth to this, having a force that is organized and equipped and

trained to employ as such, is much preferable to having an ad hoc coalition. This is especially true if you are trying to do high-end combat operations out of area with minimal warning.

Notes

¹ Quoted in Owen Pengelly, “Rapid Reaction Forces: More Questions Than Answers”, Basic Publications, 25 January 2003, n.p., on-line, Internet, 5 February 2003, available from <http://www.basicint.org/pubs/Notes/2003EU-NATOforcesfin.htm>

² Prague Summit Declaration, 21 November 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 4 February 2003, available from <http://www.expandnato.org/decpraha.html>

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Atlantic Council of the United States, *New Capabilities: Transforming NATO Forces*, (Washington, D.C., The Atlantic Council of the United States, 2002), 7.

⁵ From Joint Staff draft briefing entitled “NATO Response Force, A US Perspective”, 14 January 2003.

⁶ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, 25, available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov.nsc.nss.pdf>.

⁷ Quoted in “NATO to Change Radically, Go Global: Supreme Allied Commander”, *Defense News.com*, 1 April 2003, n.p., on-line, Internet, 3 April 2003, available from https://ca.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/ebird.cgi?doc_url=/Apr2003/e20030403171086.html

⁸ General James L. Jones, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, in conversation with author and congressional staffers during visit to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 20 February 2003.

⁹ Prague Summit Declaration.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Robert Bell, Assistant Secretary General for Defense Support, NATO, in briefing to author and congressional staffers during visit to NATO Headquarters 17 February 2003. At the time of this briefing the initiative was fairly new, so some of this information could have already changed.

¹³ Ronja Kempin, “The new NATO Response Force: Challenges for and Reactions from Europe”, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, n.p., on-line, Internet, available from <http://www.copri.dk/publications/workingpapers.htm>

Chapter 5

Beyond Prague: Fundamental Change for the Alliance

If NATO is not up to the challenge of becoming effective in the new war against terrorism, then our political leaders may be inclined to search for something else that will answer this need.¹

—Senator Richard Lugar
Speech to US-NATO Missions Annual conference, Jan 02

The agenda from NATO's Prague summit is ambitious and could be effective as part of a larger, fundamental change for the alliance. The Prague initiatives need to be implemented, but within the context of a new vision for the alliance. This vision needs to be a transatlantic view of the 21st century security environment and how to deal with it, in conjunction with a Europe-wide approach to capabilities, and a flexible structure for employing those capabilities.

A New Vision for the Alliance

To truly transform NATO, we must start at the very top with a new vision for the alliance; a mission, a strategic purpose, a reason for being. This simply boils down to deciding what NATO is for. What kind of NATO does the US and Europe want to see in the future? Will it be keeper of the European peace, or credible security apparatus?

These are two distinct approaches. We can settle for the status quo, and NATO will continue to exist as a collective defense organization and part of the consolidation of a peaceful

Europe. NATO would have less and less relevancy from the US viewpoint, except as a training and doctrine mechanism and a tool box to draw from to build US coalitions of the willing. For Europeans it would provide collective defense against a threat that no longer exists.

Alternatively it can be transformed into a 21st century security organization for western ideals. To do this NATO must be able to address common security concerns of the 21st century, which requires the ability to project power beyond its borders to defend interests in distant lands, provide collective defense of Europe, and perform other European missions as required. Klaus Becher is a Senior Fellow for European Security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and makes two excellent points along this line in his article, “Towards Strategic Dialogue in NATO: Europe’s Condition.”² First, he says, “The political decision for partnership or rivalry – for cooperative or antagonistic governance – is the most important independent variable that is likely to shape the political and economic future of the world’s societies.” So despite the differences in European and American views, so clearly demonstrated in the run up to OIF, the two sides share many common values and interests, and working together is not only desirable but often essential. And secondly, both sides need to “confirm beyond doubt their predominant commitment to joint approaches for defending the international order on which their existence depends.” This does not mean that all parties have to agree at all times, just that the overall approach should be joint whenever possible.

NATO’s vision must be based on and begin with a common threat assessment. “Terrorism, which we categorically reject and condemn in all its forms and manifestations, poses a grave and growing threat to Alliance populations, forces and territory, as well as to international security. We are determined to combat this scourge for as long as necessary. To combat terrorism effectively, our response must be multi-faceted and comprehensive.”³ This statement from the

Prague Summit Declaration would lead you to believe that our European allies are in complete harmony with the US in terms of the threat, but that is far from the truth. As discussed in Chapter 2 section on the post 9-11 world, Americans and Europeans do not have the same view of the world, and probably never will. On the subject of terrorism, you can say that the US wants to fight terrorists (preempt with military action), while the Europeans want to fight terrorism (prevent with soft power). This is of course an oversimplification of reality, and both approaches are needed to effectively attack the problem. But we must come to some agreement on the threat and an approach to deal with it or NATO cannot truly transform. Without an agreement on the threat, you cannot agree on an approach to meet it. Without an agreement on the approach, you will never agree on actions.

Is agreement possible? It depends on whom you ask. Robert Kagan, author of *Of Paradise and Power*, would probably tell you no. His characterization of Americans from Mars and Europeans from Venus is interesting reading and also makes some very good arguments. The gist of his argument is that we have fundamental differences, and that those differences are driven by our means, among other things. He says that the differences are ideological, and are based around the use of force, the legitimization of the use of force, and on a different worldview.⁴ There are definitely differences. The US has a global view in terms of security issues and policy. Most European countries do not. Europe, generally speaking, is still focused on completing the expansion and solidification of “Europe”. But the EU has an ever-greater interest globally, so it only makes sense that their focus will shift outside the region. There does not have to be and never will be perfect agreement between nations on all matters. But if NATO can agree on its reason for being, and then create some flexibility into its decision making structure, it can be a relevant organization for dealing with a wide range of issues.

If anything good has come out of the transatlantic rift, maybe it is the impetus to undertake this true transformation. For as Ivo Daalder, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings institute says, one thing is clear; we can't go back to the old relationship, as comfortable as that was, and the "status quo ante" no longer exists.⁵ Henry Kissinger agrees: "Too much has happened to prevent a return to business as usual. A revitalization of the Atlantic relationship is imperative if global institutions are to function effectively and if the world is to avoid sliding into a return to 19th-century power politics. And that revitalization must be based on a sense of common destiny rather than seeking to turn the alliance into an ala carte safety net. If common ground cannot be found-if pre-Iraq war diplomacy becomes the pattern-the United States will be driven to construct ad hoc coalitions together with the core of NATO that remains committed to a transatlantic relationship."⁶ And finally from Dr. Sean Kay, a fellow at the Eisenhower Institute, "In a time of war, a failure to look forward and make NATO a relevant tool for counter-terrorism both in terms of membership and its capabilities would be a major historical failure of creative leadership on the part of the United States and its allies."⁷

NATO as Security Apparatus for EU and NATO

As discussed in Chapter 3, NATO and the EU have made a good arrangement for sharing capabilities and planning for EU led operations. What I'm proposing is to simply expand this arrangement and formalize it. Essentially, add a "European Security" committee? pillar? council? to NATO. This would be a formalized process for NATO and EU members, and other European non-member partners, to discuss, decide, and act on transatlantic security issues, under the NATO umbrella. In a way this merely formalizes what is already done. The operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia are not strictly NATO, or EU, but a combination of members of

both organizations as well as non-members. This would make it easier for non-EU NATO members to be part of the coalition if they desired, as well as other nations. This concept is taking a coalition of the willing and giving it structure and credence beyond ad hocery. Other benefits include simplified force planning. You would largely eliminate the duplication that worries everyone.

There is support for my suggestion in the National Security Strategy, which says, “NATO’s core mission – collective defense – remains, but NATO must develop new structures and capabilities to carry that mission under new circumstances. NATO must build a capability to field, at short notice, highly mobile, specially trained forces whenever they are needed to respond to a threat against any member of the Alliance. The alliance must be able to act wherever our interests are threatened, creating coalitions under NATO’s own mandate, as well as contributing to mission-based coalitions.”⁸

There will certainly be some objections to this arrangement. For instance from France, if they were concerned about the US controlling what they consider to be European concerns and interests. The solution to that is simple; there would be no need for consensus. If there is a situation calling for a response, all concerned parties meet to discuss and all have the right to opt out. So an “EU” issue could be dealt with even though the US would not have any direct concerns and may not want to participate.

The alternative to this may very well be a division within Europe and between the US and some Europe allies. The seeds of this can already be seen, as France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg are to hold a mini-summit in April on defense issues.⁹ And there has been discussion of a “core Europe” based on German-French alliance. This splintering of Europe into east and west or old and new or core and others is the exact wrong approach. It is much better to

keep striving for that Europe whole and free, with a single organization, NATO, as the security piece of that Europe.

Europeans as a whole are very actively engaged in all manner of operations, and not under the rubrick of NATO or the EU. Germany is deploying the second largest contingent of peacekeeping troops abroad. In Afghanistan, 6,000 European troops stand shoulder to shoulder within their American partners. Europe together with the US, plays a leading role in reconstruction and nation building. The fight against terrorism has led to a huge number of actions in judicial and police operation. This high degree of cooperation has unfortunately been overshadowed by the dissent on the topic of Iraq. In the Balkans the EU is progressively taking on a more active role, with the full backing and support of the US. Of the 58,000 peacekeeping troops currently deployed in the Balkans, 38,000 are Europeans. As in Afghanistan, the financial burden is being shared, with the European Union by far the largest financial donor.¹⁰ This Europe wide security apparatus is not such a far-fetched idea. To paraphrase NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, it is working in practice as we speak, but not yet in theory.¹¹

A European Approach to Capabilities

There is one thing that almost everyone concerned can agree with, and that is that there is a severe capabilities gap between the US and its NATO allies. And a gap between what the Europeans have and what they need. There is also general agreement that it is unlikely many of the governments are going to significantly increase defense spending. There is no single solution to this problem. Obviously the Europeans have to spend smarter, and replace legacy systems. Solutions include going to an all-volunteer professional military, out-sourcing for non-military activities, and disbanding unions. There are many things that can be done to improve European

military capabilities at a national level, but the only way to truly make significant improvements is to address the problem at the European level. Many people would agree that this is the best way to achieve improvement, but would immediately dismiss it as impossible.

Will there ever be a “European Army?” Some say never, and some say with out a doubt. There are already many successful examples of cooperative defense arrangements within NATO, such as combined forces like the German-Dutch regiment. A very simple but effective arrangement started out as the Franco-British “Air Group” and eventually expanded to include Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium and others to become the European Air Group. This group simply coordinates use of space available on transport aircraft to see that it is utilized by another country if possible. If a British transport is flying to Africa to pick deliver an engine to a stranded plane, and has no cargo for the return, it can save France a lot of money by bringing home some soldiers that are due to rotate. There is a project in the works for a joint school for training German and French Tiger helicopter pilots.¹²

Perhaps the best way to make this point is let some of the Europeans speak for themselves. Robert Mroziewicz, who has been the Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations, and Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “In this context, Europe should initiate a process to replace several national armies with pan-European military capabilities and, in the longer term, a European army as a pillar of the North Atlantic Treaty. National Armies were formed to protect countries from their immediate neighbors. Today, EU and NATO member states face no risk of conflict with those neighbors who are members of the same political or security ‘club’. There is also no risk of aggression on the part of European countries which remain outside the enlarged EU and NATO. It is thus anachronistic to cling to national armies in today’s Europe.”¹³ And from Christoph Bertram, “the only way that Europe

can make headway on defense is to fuse their resources.”¹⁴ And finally from Sir Timothy Garden, “The national politics of much greater defense integration are difficult. But there are opportunities that would produce more capability for lower cost with no effect on sovereignty. Those benefits must be used to grow the missing European enabling capabilities, and that will need the EU to control funds. The “European Army” is used as a spectre to frighten the national voters. Yet, there is nothing to fear from a long-term vision of a European Army, but it would require reform of the EU institutions first. It will be a long time coming, if ever; but that does not mean that nothing can be done. What European Defence needs more than anything is political leadership.”¹⁵

As Sir Timothy Garden says, it won’t be easy in terms of national politics, but that doesn’t mean it can’t be done. Many people doubted the euro would ever come to fruition. Again, it takes leadership and vision to see that this is the way to go, and then start taking steps to make it happen. It might take 5 years or 20, but not striving for it will leave Europe’s military capability woefully inadequate and deepen division between allies.

Non-consensus decision making for NATO

NATO has long operated on the principle of consensus for making decisions and taking action. This worked well when the overall purpose of the alliance was crystal clear, defense against the Warsaw Pact, and disagreements were on relatively minor issues, or bigger issues where quick decisions were not critical to the success of an operation or strategy. This is no longer the case. Time is critical, and fast decisions and quick action crucial to be effective against terrorism. The enemy is not a static nation state, but a fluid, flexible organization. The good thing about consensus when you can achieve it is political solidarity. The drawbacks were

extremely evident prior to OIF when the US and Turkey asked for defensive planning support, and finally got it weeks later only by cutting France out of the decision.

NATO needs to investigate different options and institute a mechanism for non-consensus decision-making. The way the EU does it is a good starting point. They require consensus for some decisions, and use qualified majority voting (QMV) for others. QMV gives each country a certain number of votes based loosely on population. For instance, the UK and France both have 12 votes, while Spain has 10. (This weighting of votes accounts for different contributions of different countries, and avoids a UN type of situation, where some small obscure nation has the same vote as the US.) A certain threshold has to be reached for a decision, and once that threshold is reached members cannot veto or dissent, they can merely abstain. This constructive abstention allows actions to go ahead without total agreement by all concerned. Another option is to just have a majority required, say two-thirds, before any action can be considered collective, again with abstentions allowed. Regardless of the exact details of the arrangement, it is time to move beyond the need for consensus in every decision.

Notes

¹ Senator Richard Lugar in speech to US-NATO Missions Annual conference, Jan 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 22 February 2003, available from <http://www.uspolicy.be/Issues/Nato/terrorism.011802.htm>

² Klaus Becher, "Towards Strategic Dialogue in NATO: Europe's Condition," in *Transforming NATO Forces: European Perspectives*, ed. C. Richard Nelson and Jason S. Purcell, (The Atlantic Council of the United States, 2003), 23.

³ Prague Summit Declaration, 21 November 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 4 February 2003, available from <http://www.expandnato.org/decpraha.html>

⁴ Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review*, June & July 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 26 February 2003, available from <http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan.html>.

⁵ Ivo Daalder, panel discussion at Brookings Institute, 3 April 2003.

⁶ Henry A. Kissinger, Editorial, "Repairing the Atlantic Alliance." *Washington Post* 14 April 2003, home ed.: A17.

⁷ Dr. Sean Kay, "The Prague Summit: Beginning or end for NATO?", Eisenhower Institute on-line, n.p., on-line, Internet, 5 February 2003, available from <http://www.eisenhowerinstitute.org/commentary/kayoped4.htm>

Notes

⁸ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, 25, available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov.nsc.nss.pdf>.

⁹ “NATO Versus The European Union: The Aftermath of the Iraq war could turn NATO and the European Union into Rivals”, *Economist*, 12-18 April.

¹⁰ Hans-Bernard Weisserth, Head of ESDP Task Force, European Council Secretariat, in briefing to author and congressional staffers at EU on 21 February 2003.

¹¹ Quoted in “EU and NATO adopt framework for co-operation”, NATO Update on-line, 16 December 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 1 April 2003, available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/2002/12-december/e1216a.htm>

¹² Daniel Bastien, Klause Becher, “Transforming NATO Forces: Spending More Wisely,” in *Transforming NATO Forces: European Perspectives*, ed. C. Richard Nelson and Jason S. Purcell, (The Atlantic Council of the United States, 2003), 56.

¹³ Robert Mroziewicz, “Enlargement and the Capabilities Gap,” in *Transforming NATO Forces: European Perspectives*, ed. C. Richard Nelson and Jason S. Purcell, (The Atlantic Council of the United States, 2003), 89.

¹⁴ Christoph Bertram, panel discussion at Brookings Institute, 3 April 2003.

¹⁵ Sir Timothy Garden, “Time to choose? Britain, Europe and America”, Federal Union seminar 23 November 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 18 March 2003, available from www.tgarden.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/writings/articles/2002/Federal%20union%20.htm

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The community of values protected by NATO during the cold war, and the community of interests built within the EU after World War II, are now called upon to merge into a EuroAtlantic community of action. This is not a new vision but the completion of the vision that was started 50 years ago in the aftermath of the dehumanizing brutality of the previous 50 decades. As another wave of dehumanizing brutality emerges, this time inspired outside of Europe, it can only be hoped that policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic will show the same will and confidence as their predecessors. Appeasement a la Munich is not an option, even if faced with the risks of an escalation a la Sarajevo.”¹

—Dr.Simon Serfaty
Director, European Program
Center for Strategic and International Studies

To summarize the thesis of this paper, the trans-Atlantic relationship is in a time of crisis. There are many reasons for the crisis, which was exacerbated and clearly exposed by events leading up to OIF. But despite differences between the US and Europeans, and differences among Europeans, we share many common values and interests. NATO has been and hopefully will continue to be a vital instrument for protecting and furthering those interests. To do that, it must transform to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. Important elements of that transformation are those from the Prague Summit: the NRF, the new strategic commands, and the PCC. What's missing is transformation at the strategic level. My prescription for that is to address problems from a European-wide perspective, by making NATO the security apparatus for all of NATO and the EU. Capabilities also need to be addressed from a European perspective, as this is the only way to achieve substantial improvement. And finally, create a

more flexible decision-making process for NATO where consensus is not always required before action.

It is unfortunate that NATO is at a critical point in its history, when tough decisions must be made and unity is critical, yet relationships are at an all-time low. What this paper puts forth for the future of NATO is ambitious, difficult, and would take years to realize. If we can't truly transform NATO, it will not disappear over night, but will gradually lose its importance on the world stage and its relevancy for America. Therefore we must strive for a fundamental transformation regardless of the difficulties. The worse that can happen is we fail and we still have NATO muddling along. The best that can happen is we transform NATO into a vital and flexible organization capable of addressing a host of security issue now and into the future.

Notes

¹ Dr. Simon Serfaty, "A Global Dimension for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership", testimony to Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defense Policy and the Committee on Industry, External Trade, research and Energy, European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium, 19 February 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 31 October 2002, available on-line from <http://www.csis.org/hill/ts020219serfaty.htm>.

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